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ABSTRACT

The principle of cognitive consistency, formulated by Jack Snyder, explains decision-making under stressful conditions. Snyder contends that decision-making under stressful conditions creates a drive toward cognitive consistency and brings into operation tendencies: (1) toward a perception of certainty about an opponent's intention and the righteousness of one's own position; (2) toward perceiving the principal values in the situation as consistent rather than inconsistent; and (3) toward adopting a strategy of compellance rather than negotiation. A revised model of this principle is used to evaluate foreign policy toward Central America during the Reagan administration and to contrast it with that of the Carter administration. Critical events preceding Reagan's election produced uncertainty in foreign affairs during his administration. Under Reagan, aid to El Salvador and Honduras increased dramatically and three new Central American countries received increased aid. The Carter administration was marked by a more analytical model of decision-making as exemplified by the policy on human rights. A "normalization" of the situation in Central America should bring about the return of analytical decision-making, according to this model. The signing of the Arias Peace Plan and the tentative negotiations which followed suggest that watchful accommodation will replace the current policy of military intervention. Thirty-one footnotes are included and an appendix provides a series of graphs and charts (SM)

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THE PRINCIPLE OF COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY AND CENTRAL AMERICAN POLICY: A COMPARISON OF THE CARTER AND REAGAN ADMINISTRATIONS

Presented to the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies
Tempe, Arizona
October 12, 1987
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The Principle of Cognitive Consistency and Central American Policy: A Comparison of the Carter and Reagan Administrations

In "Rationality at the Brink: The Role of Cognitive Processes in Failures of Deterrence,"[1] Jack Snyder's principle of cognitive consistency explains decision making under the stressful conditions produced by an acute crisis in international relations. This analysis of U. S. foreign policy in Central America shows how Snyder's model can be modified to explain the difference in perceptions of conflict in Central America between the Carter and Reagan Administrations and the differeing policies which have resulted.

Snyder's Principle of Cognitive Consistency

Snyder outlines a two-value game which is played by two superpowers in "crisis" situations involving the risk of nuclear war. The game involves a necessary trade-off between two values. The first of these values is associated with the "immediate issue of contention." During the Cuban missile crisis this value was the maintenance of U.S. prestige in the international arena. In the Berlin crisis, it was maintaining the credibility of U.S. commitments. The second value is limiting the possibility of war between the two superpowers, a war which could involve the use of nuclear weapons. According to Snyder, any attempt to maximize the changes of achieving one goal in a corresponding decrease in the changes of achieving the second.

Borrowing from John Steinbruner's cybernetic model of

decision making,[2] Snyder says that in crisis situations where deterrence is threatened, the decision maker will tend to disregard these trade-offs. These "crises" create tremendous uncertainty which produces high levels of stress for the decision maker. Borrowing again, this time from Ole Holsti,[3] Snyder contends that with such increases in cognitive stress, problem solving becomes more rigid and decision makers being to lock themselves into a strategy of compellence. This is because the mind craves certainty so much that it must create this certainty when there is none. In other words, when under stress, the decision maker will conceptualize the problem at hand so that trade-offs between desired values can actually be denied. Thus positions which are taken early in the process of resolution and which generally favor values of immediate concern such as prestige and credibility, determine the course of decision making for the remainder of the crisis. In this way, the decision maker can conceptually deny the necessary costs of trading off between values. In fact, the decision make will see them as consistent with each other. The result, according to Snyder, is that the decision maker will be more likely to choose a strategy of compellence than one of negotiation and compromise with the opponent.

By contrast, the analytic style of decision making is more typical of highly structured situations in which there is a high degree of certainty. Under these circumstances the decision maker recognizes inconsistencies and therefore the inevetability of trade-offs between the competing values. He is also less likely to be self-righteous in his actions and to see the

opponent as an unredeemable evildoer. As a result, negotiations and compromise will generally prevail over a strategy of compellence.

Snyder uses President Kennedy's response to the Cuban missile crisis as a case study for the model. In his analysis, Snyder identifies three tendencies in decision making which indicate that the drive for cognitive consistency or the "cognitive principle," is in effect. These are 1) a tendency toward unwarranted certainty about an opponent's intentions and toward the self-righteousness about one's own position, 2) a tendency to see the two principle values involved in the controversy as consonant rather than inconsistent with each other, and 3) a tendency to adopt a strategy of compellance (in which the decision maker expects to gain all) rather than one of negotiation and compromise (in which the recognititon of trade-offs results in the decision maker's ability to accept certain costs).

In this case study, Snyder identifies the crisis which precipitated Kennedy's drive for cognitive consistency as the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba. The element of uncertainty in the situation was due to the unknown motivations and intentions of the Soviet Union in the emplacement of these missiles and the significance of this move. In addition, considerable disorientation was caused by the sudden and unprecedented image of the U.S. as a nation with enemy missiles at its doorstep.

For Snyder, the stress caused by uncertainty and confusion regarding Soviet motivations and intentions in Cuba was

exacerbated by other pressures on the president. Both Congress and the public at large were beginning to see Kennedy as ineffective in confronting national enemies. Both the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion and the recent confrontation with Khrushchev in Vienna had precipitated the domestic allegation that "he was long on profile but short on courage."[4] In addition, members of both parties in Congress were pressuring the president to take a firm stand against the Soviets. Finally, the election campaign had put the focus on Kennedy's leadership ability at that point, especially since the republicans were making the ineffectiveness of his foreign policy a campaign issue. As Snyder points out, it is easy to understand the drive to "win big" under such circumstances.

Snyder shows that a trade-off in a controversy existed between the need to preserve the military status quo, stand firm against the Soviets, and maintain U.S. prestige in the world on one hand, while minimizing the risk of nuclear war on the other.

Snyder's three indicators of the principle of cognitive consistency are clearly identified in the study. First, Kennedy's "unwarranted certainty" regarding the Russians was that they would continue to push for concessions unless the line was drawn then and there. Furthermore, Kennedy had convinced himself of the absolute righteousness of his position. Second, Kennedy denied the existence of trade-offs by actually equating a loss of U.S. prestige with the risk of nuclear war. In his view, aggressive behavior on the part of the Soviet Union would lead inevitably to war, unless checked by the U.S. Thus he was able to argue that the U.S. must "risk war now to avoid certain war

later." Finally, Kennedy's insistence of unconditional removal of the missiles without consideration of any other issue was clear evidence of a strategy of compellence rather than one of negotiation and compromise. The result, fortunately, was Khrushchev's acquiescence to this demand. Snyder's warns, however, that if Khruschev had adopted a similar perception of the controversy, deterrence might well have failed.

Critique of the Principle of Cognitive Consistency

Snyder's model is based on perceptions. The focus is on the individual decision maker, the international environment and the interaction between the two. Snyder does not stop at the level of individual cognitive processes, however. He recognizes the role of domestic pressures as a mediating factor between key international events and the cognitions of the president. Thus Congress and electoral parties became critical intervening variables.

The role of these groups, however, was momentary. Previous foreign policy "blunders" by Kennedy and an election which happened to be approaching combined to place the president in an unusually sensitive position regarding the Soviet move. The momentary nature of the crisis facilitates the model's focus on the individual decision maker rather than on the state as a whole. As such, the model adequately explains short term decision making under the specific circumstances described.

By treating Congressional pressure and electoral politics as chance happenings, however, the model deemphasizes the importance of public perceptions and their influence on foreign policy in

general. Likewise, the focus on the individual decision maker during a critical short term period in foreigh policy deemphasizes the role of the state as a whole in translating public pressures into foreign policy. Finally, because the model focuses on short term decision making, its capacity to explain major turning points and long term trends in foreign policy is limited.

To compensate for these limitations, we need only broaden each variable to make it more generalizable. Thus rather than treating critical domestic influences as chance occurrences, we would evaluate public perception and influence as a constant factor. Rather than focusing on the individual decision maker we would evaluate the behavior of the state as a whole. Finally, instead of short term decisions regarding foreign policy, we would evaluate long term foreign policy trends.

These adjustments force us to think more broadly about the concept of "crisis." In Snyder's model, a crisis is largely brought about by a coincidence of events combined with time constraints on decision making. In his case study, the key international event precipitating the controversy is a move or countermove for power and influence by an opponent in the balancing game between the two super-powers. The importance of this move should not be overlooked in assessing the nature of the ensuing crisis. Snyder points out that some officials involved in the missile crisis were not surprised by the discovery. This was logical since the U.S. had previously deployed missiles in Turkey, a move which might well have posed a similar dilemma for the Soviet Union. In addition, previous interaction between the

U.S and the Soviet Union since World War II had consisted of alternating moves in the pursuit of power and influence in the world. Thus the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba, while tension inducing, should not have been wholly unexpected. Such a move became a crisis when it was combined with domestic pressures on Kennedy to "stand firm" for the sake of national credibility.

Such domestic pressures, however, are more than chance occurrences even in Snyder's model. In his study, they were the result of previous policy "failures" -- moves and countermoves which had resulted in gains for the Soviet Union and corresponding losses for the U.S. Thus, from Snyder's own case study, we can conceptualize "crisis" as a periodic phenomenon which occurs when 1) one country is faced with a possible loss of prestige and influence due to a critical event favoring the opponent and 2) this event is preceded by foreign policy failures wherein that country appears to have lost power and prestige. These failures trigger domestic pressures for greater resolve on the part of decision makers.

Because they are periodic and not wholly unexpected then, such "crises" might more usefully be referred to as "periods of uncertainty." Snyder himself emphasizes the importance of uncertainty in his conception of crisis. This is an important distinction for the revised model and for the case study of foreign policy toward Central America which will be examined here. Because the revised model deals with an extended period of decision making -- in this case, several years -- the notion of crisis is inappropriate. Yet the concept of uncertainty is entirely relevant.

Figure 1 (see Appendix) summarizes the essential differences between the two models. References to the case study of foreign policy toward Central America are clarified in the next section.

Foreign Policy in Central America: The Cognitive Principle and the Government Administration

The revised model enables us to evaluate foreign policy toward Central America during the Reagan Administration and to contrast it with that of the Carter Administration. In so doing, I will rely on the same three tendencies resulting from the operation of the cognitive paradigm which Snyder used to illustrate the role it played during the Cuban missile crisis. Again, these are 1) the tendency toward unwarranted certainty about an opponent's intentions and toward a perception of the righteousness of one's own position, 2) a tendency to see the two principle values involved in the controversy as consonant rather than inconsistent with each other, and 3) the tendency to adopt a strategy of compellence rather than one of negotiation and compromise. As will be seen, the Reagan Administration clearly exemplifies the collective operation of the cognitive principle in the process of shaping and carrying out policy toward Central America. By contrast, the Carter Administration exemplifies the analytic model of decision making in which these three tendencies are revised.

1. Unwarranted Certainty About the Opponent and Self-Righteousness: In Snyder's analysis, President Kennedy assured himself that the Russians sought only to force the U.S. and other countries into ever greater concessions, even at the

risk nuclear war. Similarly, the Reagan Administration has presented leftist insurgents in Central America as relentlessly agressive -- even evil -- in nature. The President has warned:

> The goal of the professional guerrilla movements in Central America is as simple as it is sinister: to destabilize the entire region from the Panama Canal to Mexico.[5]

The Administration's struggle to convey both certainty and simplicity in the motives of its opponents to the south is even more evident in the following statement by Secretary of State Schultz to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

> In talking with foreign leaders and Members of Congress, I find that just about everyone agrees on what the problem is. It is that a democratic revolution has been betrayed by a violent minority willing and even eager to serve as an instrument of Soviet and Cuban strategic designs on the hemisphere, including armed aggression in the form of support for terrorism and subversion.[6]
>
> (Emphasis added)

Closely related to these perceptions is the tendency to dichotimize the U.S. and its opponent into forces of "good and "evil" respectively. Thus Kennedy saw it as the U.S.' responsibility to champion the interests of the remainder of the world against the imminent threat of nuclear attack by the Soviet Union. In the case of the Reagan Administration and Central America, the contrast between the forces of "good and "evil" is

even more striking. This time the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is portrayed as the evildoer. The president describes this government:

> The government of Nicaragua has imposed a new dictatorship; it has refused to hold the elections it promised; it has seized control of most media...it denied the bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church the right to say Mass on radio during Holy Weel; it insulted and mocked the Pope; it has driven the Miskito Indians from their homelands...it has moved against the private sector and free labor unions; it condoned mob action against Nicaragua's independent human rights commission...<u>The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua turned out to be just an exchange of one set of autocratic rulers for another, and the people still have no freedom, no democratic rights, and more poverty</u>.[7] (Emphasis added)

A perceived unity between Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union are further proof of its malevolent nature.

> Even worse than its predecessor (the Somoza dictatorship), it is helping Cuba and the Soviets to destabilize our hemisphere.[8]

The nature of evildoing in Central America and the heroism of U.S. efforts at intervention are further defined by other key officials in the Reagan Administration. Elliott Abrams,

Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, has portrayed the Nicaraguan government as a "communist dictatorship" while U.S. promotes only "democracy and human rights" in Central America.[9]

In his call for military aid to the "resistance" forces based in Honduras, Secretary of State Schultz has described the Nicaraguan government in even more horrendous terms:

> Managua has become a gathering place for terrorists from all over the world, including Europe and the Middle East as well as Latin America.[10]

These views have been neatly summed up by the president. Referring to the conflict between the Nicaraguan government and the counterrevolutionary forces supported by the U.S., he declared, "The struggle here is not between Right versus Left but right versus wrong."[11]

These perceptions contrast sharply with those of the Carter Administration. Official reports demonstrated a high degree of tolerance for uncertainty regarding the targets of its human rights policy. In 1977, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance wrote,

> We can nourish no illusions that a call to the banner of human rights will bring sudden transformations in authoritarian societies.[12]

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher reiterated this caution, plainly discouraging attitudes of self-righteousness.

> We must not proceed as if we had unlimited power. Just as our power is limited, so is our wisdom. We must avoid certitude and its unattrative partner, self-righteousness. We

> recognize the variety of human experience. Differing histories and circumstances will necessarily mean that there will be a great diversity in political systems and economic conditions throughout the world.[13] (Emohasis added)

In addition, the administration's capacity for self-criticism was demonstrated by a statement by William H. Luers, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs:

> The peoples of this hemisphere are no longer in awe of us. They respect our vitality, success, technology, and prosperity. But they charge that we have an insatiable thirst for the world's resources, that we are unwilling to share our expanding wealth, and that we have used our enormous power arbitrarily in the past.[14]

2. Principle Values Seen as Consonant Rather Than Conflicting: During the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy denied the existence of a trade-off between lowering the risk of war and maintaining prestige by declaring that a risk of war now was better than the certainty of war later. With regard to Central American foreign policy, the Reagan Administration has also avoided trade-offs in a number of ways. First, the government's downgrading of human rights issues was justified by its greater concern for "international

terrorism." Early in the Administration Secretary of State Alexander Haig told reporters that "international terrorism will take the place of human rights in our concern, because it is the ultimate abuse of human rights."[15] This rationale is questionable given that, according to the CIA, international terrorism had resulted in fewer than 4,000 deaths throughout the world.[16] While not to be trivialized, this figure pales next to the statistics on deaths resulting from human rights violation.

Similarly, "authoritarian" regimes were endowed with qualities that set them above "totalitarian" regimes and made them worthy of U.S. support. In 1981, United Nations Ambassador Kirkpatrick advocated U.S. support for authoritarian regimes because, unlike totalitarian governments, they

> do not disturb the habitual rhythms of work and leisure, habitual places of residence, habitual patterns of family and personal relations. Because the miseries of traditional life are familiar, they are bearable to ordinary people who, growing up in the society, learn to cope... Such societies create no refugees.[17]

Furthermore, in such regimes, there was a far greater likelihood of "progressive liberalization and democratization" than in "revolutionary communist regimes."[18] Accordingly, in 1983, President Reagan portrayed El Salvador as a

> democracy beginning to take root... The new government is now delivering on its promises of democracy, reforms, and free elections.[19]

Yet at that time, El Salvador was identified as one of the worst human rights violators in the world.[20]

In another denial of trade-offs, the president minimized the risk of escalating the conflict in Central America by increasing U.S. military intervention:

> There is no thought of sending American combat troops to Central America. They are not needed -- indeed, they have not been requested there. All our neighbors ask of us is assistance in training and arms to protect themselves while they build a better, freer life.[21]

Thus the Reagan Administration sought to convince Congress and the public that everything was to be gained and nothing lost by its policy in Central America. The Administration's moral concern with international terrorism was of the highest order. Its support for authoritarian governments actually made political and economic progress possible. Finally, all of this was to be accomplished with no threat of U.S. troop involvement in a foreign war. All of these rationalizations enabled the U.S. to shore up the status quo, and maintain credibility and prestige in the world. Reagam himself clearly exemplified the drive for cognitive consistency in the following statement to Congress:

> Join me in a program that prevents Communist victory in the short run but goes beyond to

> product, for the deprived people of the area, the reality of present progress and the promise of more to come.[22]

By contrast, Carter officials appear to have accepted the necessity of trade-offs. Here, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher recognizes a fundamental conflict between long and short term interests of the U.S. in seeking to implement its policy on human rights.

> We must recognize that our actions may provike retaliation against our short-term interests or even sometimes against the victoms of repression we seek to assist. We will much preper to find positive and creative ways to encourage governments to respect human rights rather than to penalize poor performance. But where such positive measures are not possible, <u>the risks of imposing sanctions must be faced and carefully assessed</u>.[23]

Thus Carter;s human rights policy appears to be more contradictory in the eys of that Administration than does Reagan's policy of militarization in Central America from the latter Administration's point of view.

The Carter Administration's conception of Cuba also revealed a tendency to recognize [the necessity of] trade-offs in [principle values when dealing] with an opponent. In 1980, Myles Frechette, Director of the Office of Cuban Affairs, described the complex interaction between the Soviet Union and Cuba. While

Cuba was highly dependent on the Soviet Union for both economic support and military weaponry, it continued to struggle for independence by increasing labor productivity through material incentives. Because this tactic held out little hope of success, Cuba had began to approach the U.S. in hopes of opening up trade relations and expanding tourism. The result of easing tensions between the two countries had been improvement in the human rights situation in Cuba, greater cooperation in drug traffic interdiction, fishing rights and provisional maritime boundary agreements, and greater communication in general. However, the Cubans had stood firm on foreign policy in the Caribbean as one promoting cooperatgion and economic development tempered by increased concern for U.S. security interests in the Basin.[24] Thus, the Administration saw an opening up of relations with Cuba as both an opportunity and a potential threat.

3. A Strategy of Compellence vs. One of Negotiation and Compromise: During the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy chose a strategy of compellence in which the Soviets were forced to either remove their missiles from Cuba or face the threat of a nuclear war in the Caribbean. Similarly, the Reagan Administration's strategy in Central America is one which precludes compromise with enemy forces, whether leftist insurgents in El Salvador or the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, soon after Reagan took office, Thomas Enders, Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, demanded that the government demilitarize itself entirely.[25] This was regarded by the Nicaraguan government as a humiliating and

unacceptable request on the part of a nation which was already engaged in the formation of a counterrevolutionary military fron. In El Salvador, negotiations with leftist insurgents and considerations of land reform were also ruled out early in the Reagan Administration.[26]

Beyond this, Reagan's policy in Central America has involved massive increases of military assistance, both public and private. Since 1981, the anti-Sandinista forces have received $230 million in official aid from the U.S.[27] In addition, the president has been involved in lobbying the private sector for funds for these forces.[28]

Figures 2 and 3 show the dramatic increases in military and economic aid which took place after 1980. Both El Salvador and Honduras received significantly greater amounts even before Reagan took office suggesting that external events were significantly affecting U.S. policy before Carter left office.

Figutes 4, 5 and 6 are exponential graphs which enable us to discern fluctuations in trends in military assistance. From here we can see that military assistance takes a sharp turn upward after 1979 while the curve for economic aid appears to be much smoother. While military aid rises significantly at the end of the Carter Administration, it is difficult to say whether this trend would have reached the heights it was to achieve later during Reagan's term of office.

Perhaps more important for the issue of compellence is the percent of total assistance which went for military purposes. Figure 7 shows that even in 1981, the final year in which the Carter Administration might take responsibility for the budget,

this percentage only barely surpassed the figure for 1977, a Ford year. During the three previous years, it was significantly lower. By contrast, in all five Reagan years, the percentage is at or above the percentage in each of the Carter years. The average percent for the four Carter years, 1978 to 1981, is 8.4% while the average percent for the five Reagan years, 1982 to 1986, is 24.3%. Thus Reagan's policy in Central America is far more militaristic than Carter's in both absolute and relative terms.

Comments by officials under Carter confirm the intention to negotiate rather than coerce. For instance, Luers pointed out that

> Governments will remain skeptical of our assurances. We must be open in our relations and abstain from our historic compulsion to design the future of our neighbors. We can convince them now only by our performance, not rhetoric.[29]

To recall Snyder's argument, the refusal to accept a trade-off between some value and the value of preventing war leads to the cognitive consistent view that war must be fought either now or later. The three values discussed discretely here are actually, for Snyder, interlinked, and one of these values must always be that of preventing war. In this case, (in which the administration becomes the unit of analysis), the Reagan Administration saw no trade-off between preventing war and opposing the spread of communism. Rather, officials saw the

situation as one war now or war later, and chose a strategy of compellence now.

Conclusions

According to the model then, we can conclude that the Reagan Administration has, in some sense, been operating under greater pressure and uncertainty than did the Carter Administration. What has created this pressure and uncertainty? Again referring to the model, we should examine key events threatening the loss of national prestige and influence which took place just before policy changed. According to Figures 4, 6 and 7, the turning point appears to have been late in the Carter Administration. Figures 2 and 3 show that El Salvador and, to a lesser extent Honduras, were already receiving increases in aid late in the Carter years. Furthermore, Nicaraguan aid had already been shut off under Carter. Thus the Carter Administration was probably already experiencing the pull toward cognitive consistency.

It took a different set of personalities, however, to consolidate the change in policy. Thus under Reagan, aid to El Salvador and Honduras increased dramatically and three new countries -- Panama, Costa Rica and Guatemala -- received massive increases in both economic and military aid during his Administration.

Carter, although notably dedicated to the principle of a human rights policy, did not introduce anything new in this regard. Some have traced the roots of human rights advocacy to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. In any case, by 1973, the Foreign Assistance Act had already tied aid to human rights.

By 1975, the International Development and Food Assistance Act required that aid be withheld from nations with records of extreme human rights violations. In addition, although Carter's pronouncements on human rights were louder and clearer, the relationship between human rights and foreign assistance during the Carter years was not significantly different from that of the Ford-Nixon years.[30] This continuity combined with an absence of any major major disorienting event in the international system may have provided the certainty which enabled Carter officials to operate through an analytical paradigm.

By contrast, according to the model we would assume that the Reagan Administration took over during a period of great uncertainty regarding U.S. prestige and influence in the world. The model suggests that two interacting variables are creating this general sense of uncertainty: First, an international opponent has achieved new influence which threatens the prestige and influence of the U.S. Second, this move has precipitated public fear, anxiety and demands for resolve on the part of the government. Indeed, several critical events immediately preceded the election of Ronald Reagan to office. These were the fall of the Shah in Iran in 1979, the revolutionary transition in Nicaragua in 1979, the Iranian hostage taking which became a media event in 1980, and leftist insurgency in El Salvador which reached a peak in 1980. The widespread perception of President Carter as lacking resolve in the face of these visible challenges to the hegemonic status of the U.S. is frequently cited as the reason for the subsequent election of President Reagan.

Chart 1 compares the essential features of Snyder's model of the cognitivie principle based on the in dividual decision maker with those of the revised model based on the government administration. While Snyder's model explains the effects of an acute crisis on the individual decision maker and short term policy outputs, the revised model more adequately explains the effects of general uncertainty on administrative decision making and long term changes in foreign policy.

These conclusions are borne out in a study on the behavior of hegemonic states by Charles Doran and Wes Parsons.[31] The authors identified critical points during the rise and decline of major powers. During these critical periods, the state becomes more inclined toward a militaristic course of action. One critical point occurs immediately after the apogee and decline of nation as a major power in the world. At this point, political actors, previously accustomed to a position of dominance, suddenly perceive the decline. Both governments and societies find it difficult to adjust to the new behavioral roles and become vulnerable to hyperinsecurity and aggressiveness.

If the model here is correct in identifying key international events and the public perception of these as causes of acute stress, then we must conclude that the "normalization" of the situation in Central America will bring the return of analytical decision making and the politics of moderation. A "crisis" by its very definition, after all, can not continue indefinitely. The signing of the five-nation Arias Peace Plan, the tentative negotiations which have followed, and the diminishing alarm in the U.S. over events in Central America all

suggest that, in the future, watchful accommodation will replace the current policy of military intervention.

Footnotes

1. Jack Snyder, "Rationality at the Brink: The Role of Cognitive processes in Failures of Deterrence, "World Politics, April, 1978

2. John D. Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974

3. Ole Holsti, "Crisis, Stress, and Decision-making," International Social Science Journal, No. 1, 1971

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5. Ronald Reagan, "U.S. Responsibility in Central America," Crisis and Opportunity: U.S. Policy in Central and the Caribbean, Mark Falcoff and Robert Royal, eds., Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1984, p. 15

6. Georgt Schultz, "Nicaragua: Will Democracy Prevail?" Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 27, 1986, Department of State Bulletin, April, 1986, p. 32

7. Reagan, "U.S. Responsibility in Central America" pp. 13-14

8. Ibid.

9. Elliott Abrams, "Permanent Dictatorship in Nicaragua?" From a statement before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 5, 1986, Department of State Bulletin, April 1986, p. 83

10. Schultz, "Nicaragua: Will Democracy Prevail?" p. 32

11. The New York Times, March 3, 1985

12. Cyrus Vance, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy," Department of State Bulletin, May 23, 1977, p. 508

13. Warren Christopher, "Human Rights: Principle and Realism," Department of State Bulletin, August 29, 1977

14. William H. Luers, "Inter-American Relations in an Era of Change," Department of State Bulletin, April, 1977, p. 348

15. "The Talk of the Town," The New Yorker, February 16, 1981, p.31

16. David Carleton and Michael Stohl, "The Foreign Polity of Human Rights: Rhetoric and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan, Human Rights Quarterly, May, 1985

17. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Establishing a Viable Human Rights Policy," World Affairs, Spring, 1981, p. 327

18. Ibid.

19. Reagan, "U.S. Responsibility in Central America" p. 10

20. See Carleton and Stohl, "The Foreign Policy of Human Rights"

21. Reagan, "U.S. Responsibility in Central America" p. 17

22. Ibid., p. 18

23. Christopher, "Human Rights: Principle and Realism," p. 271

24. Myles R.R. Frechette, "Cuban-Soviet Impact on the Western Hemisphere," Department of State Bulletin, July 1980

25. North American Congress on Latin America, "Sowing Dragon's Teeth," July/August, 1986, p. 22

26. Paul E. Sigmund, "Latin America: Change or Continuity?" Foreign Affairs, Fall, 1981

27. North American Congress on Latin America, "the CIA's War," July/August, 1986

28. Ibid.

29. Luers, "Inter-American Relations in an Era of Change," p. 349

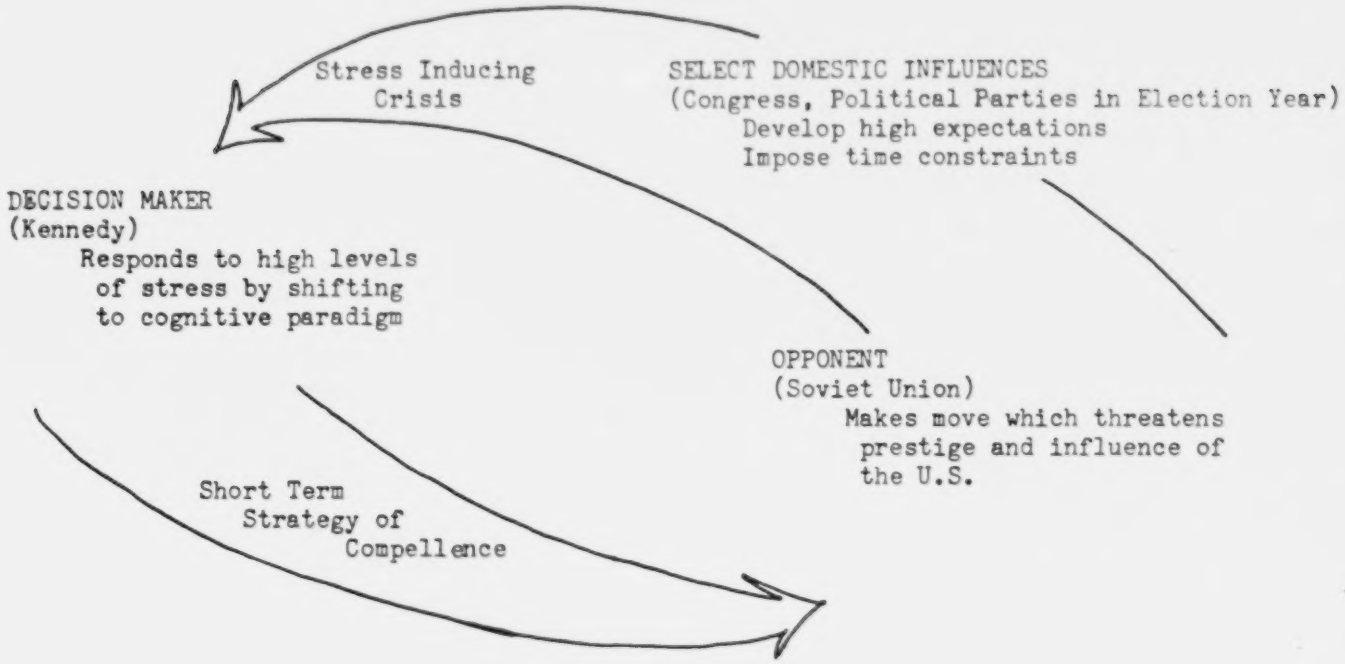
30. Michael Stohl, David Carleton, and Steven E. Johnson, "Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Assistance: From Nixon to Carter," Journal of Peace Research, No. 3, 1984. It should be noted that rhetoric alone from the President of the U.S. can be more than an empty gesture. As Jacobo Timerman said,"those of us who were imprisoned, those who are in prison still, will never forget President Carter and his contribution to the battle for human rights." NYT, June 15, 1981 quoted by Stohl and Carleton, "The Foreign Policy of Human Rights," p. 226

31. Charles F. Doran and Wes Parsons, "War and the Cycle of Relative Power," American Political Science Review p. 74, December 1980

APPENDIX

Figure 1

Snyder's Model: The Effect of Crisis on the Cognitive Process of an Individual Decision Maker



Revised Model: The Effect of General Uncertainty on the Collective Conceptualization Process of a Government Administration

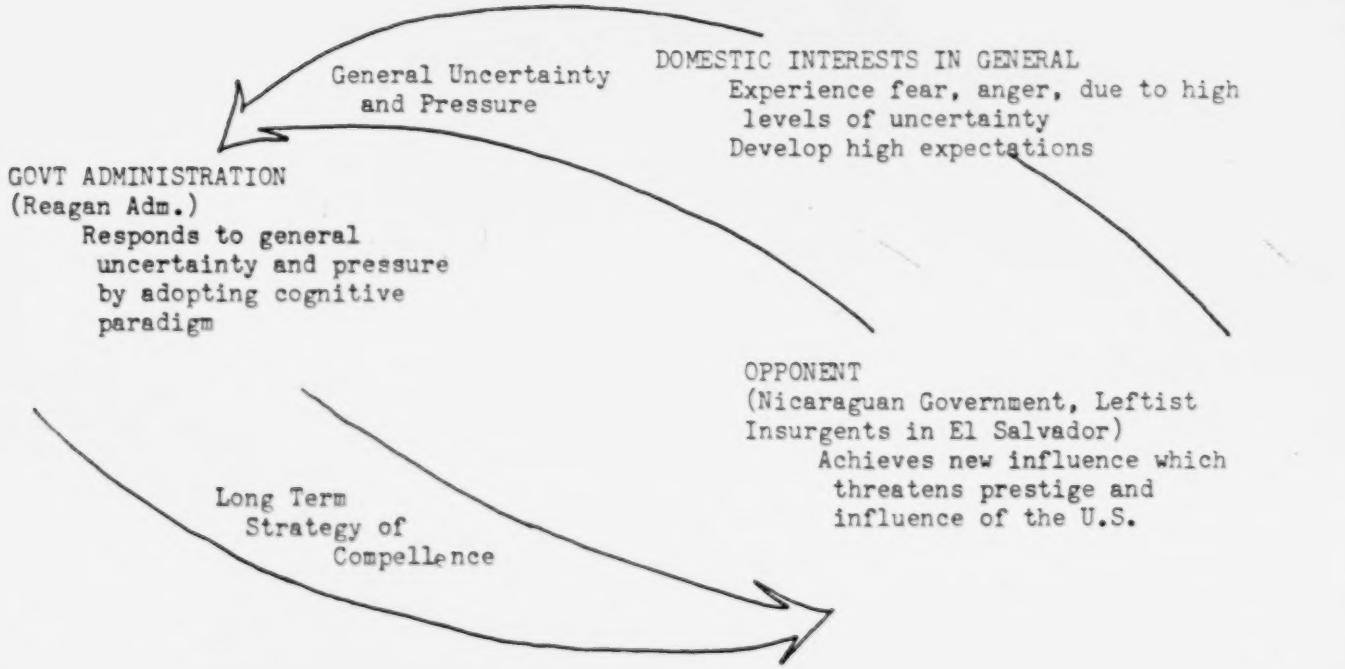
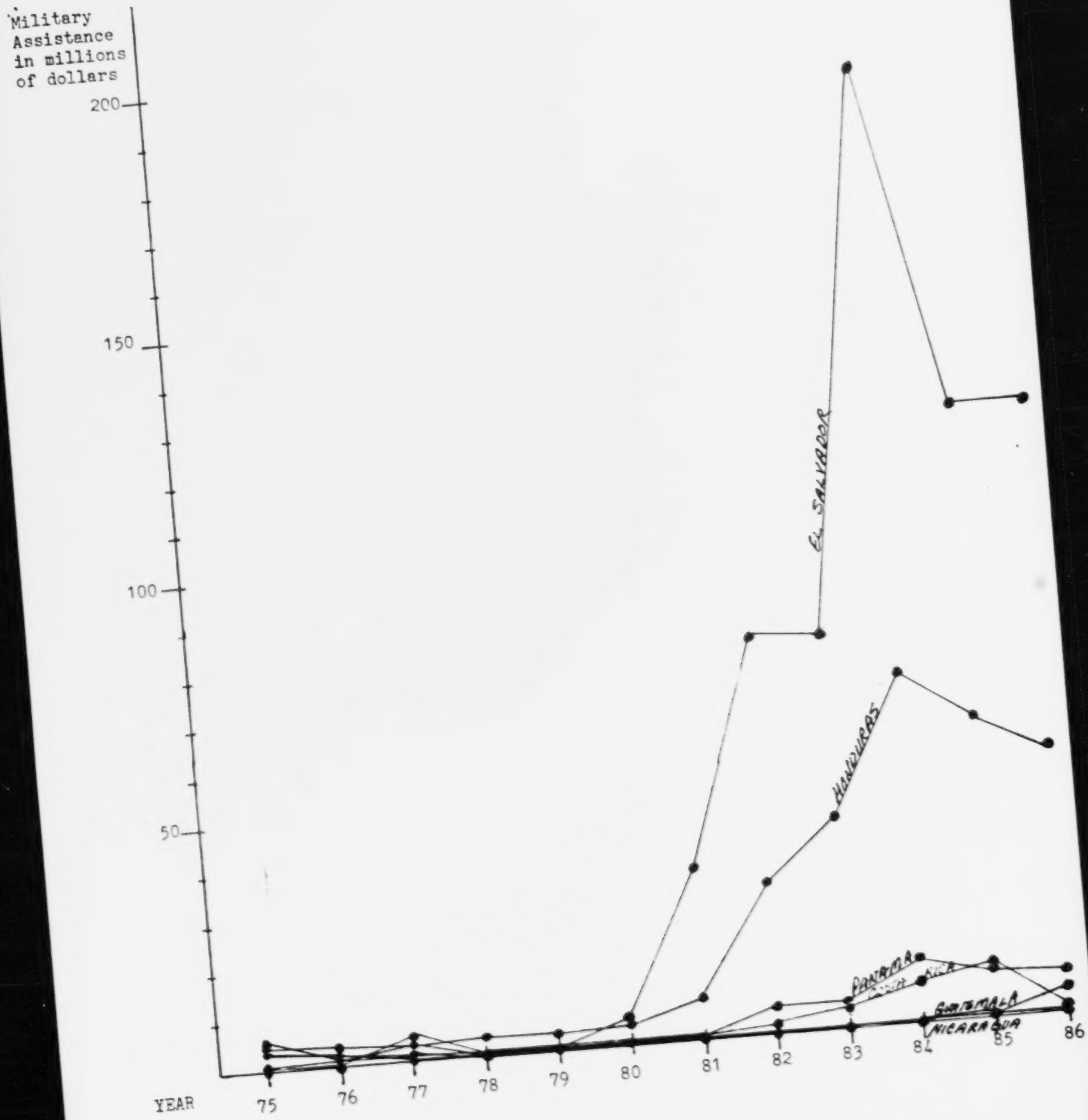


Figure 2: Official Foreign Military Assistance to Central America, 1975-1986
Figures from U.S. Agency for International Development



. . . Figure 3: Official Foreign Economic Assistance to Central America, 1975-1986
Figures from U.S. Agency for International Development

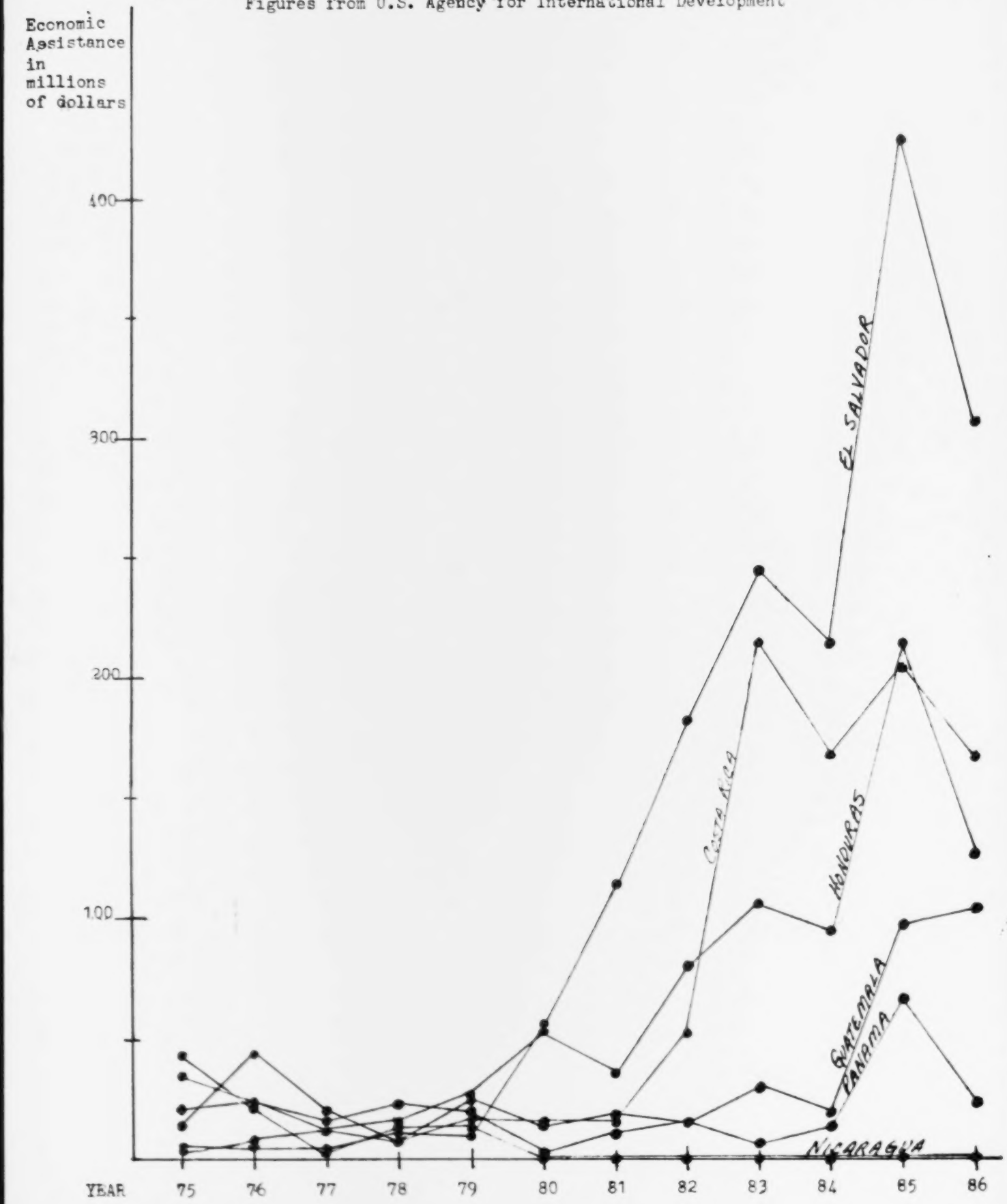
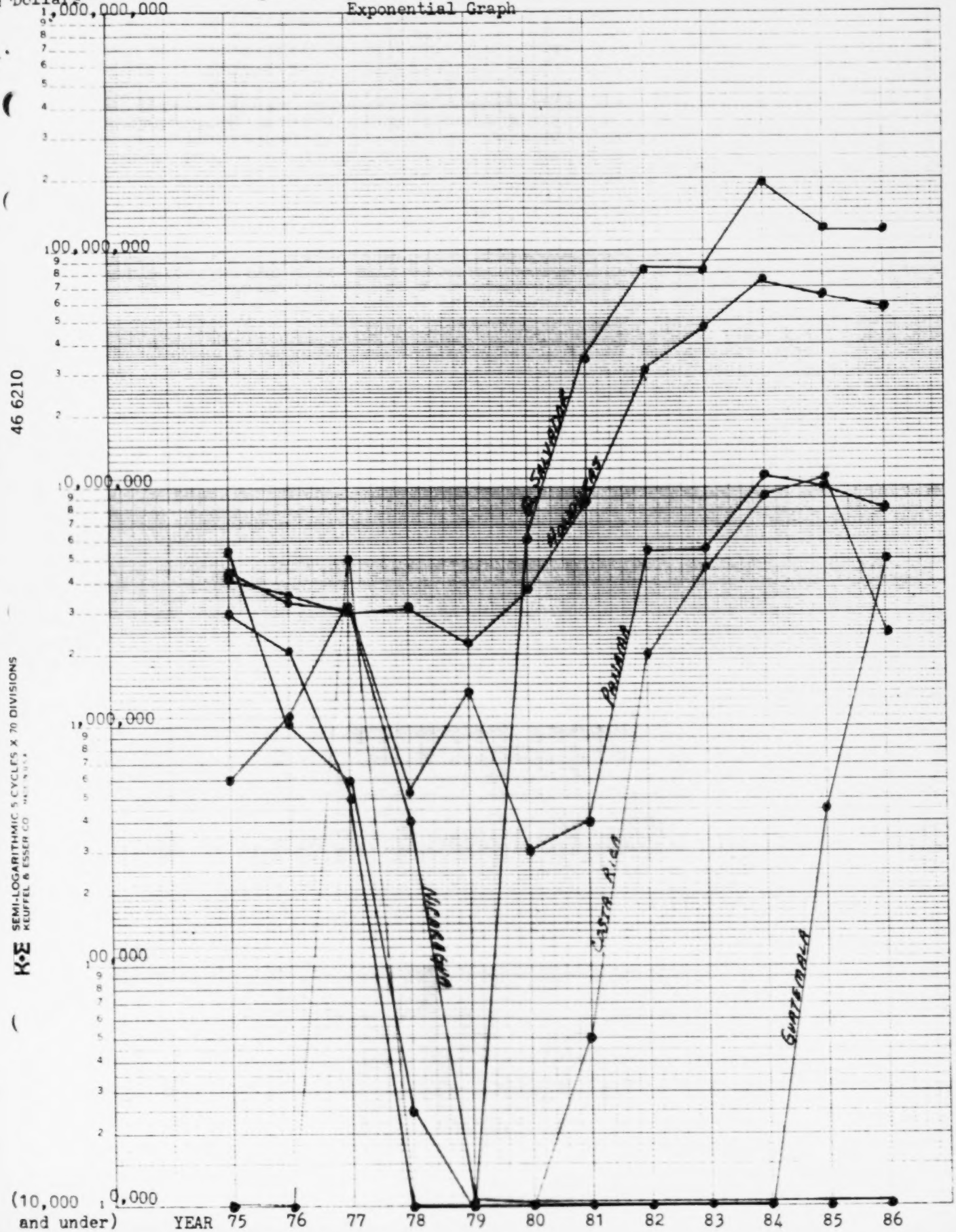
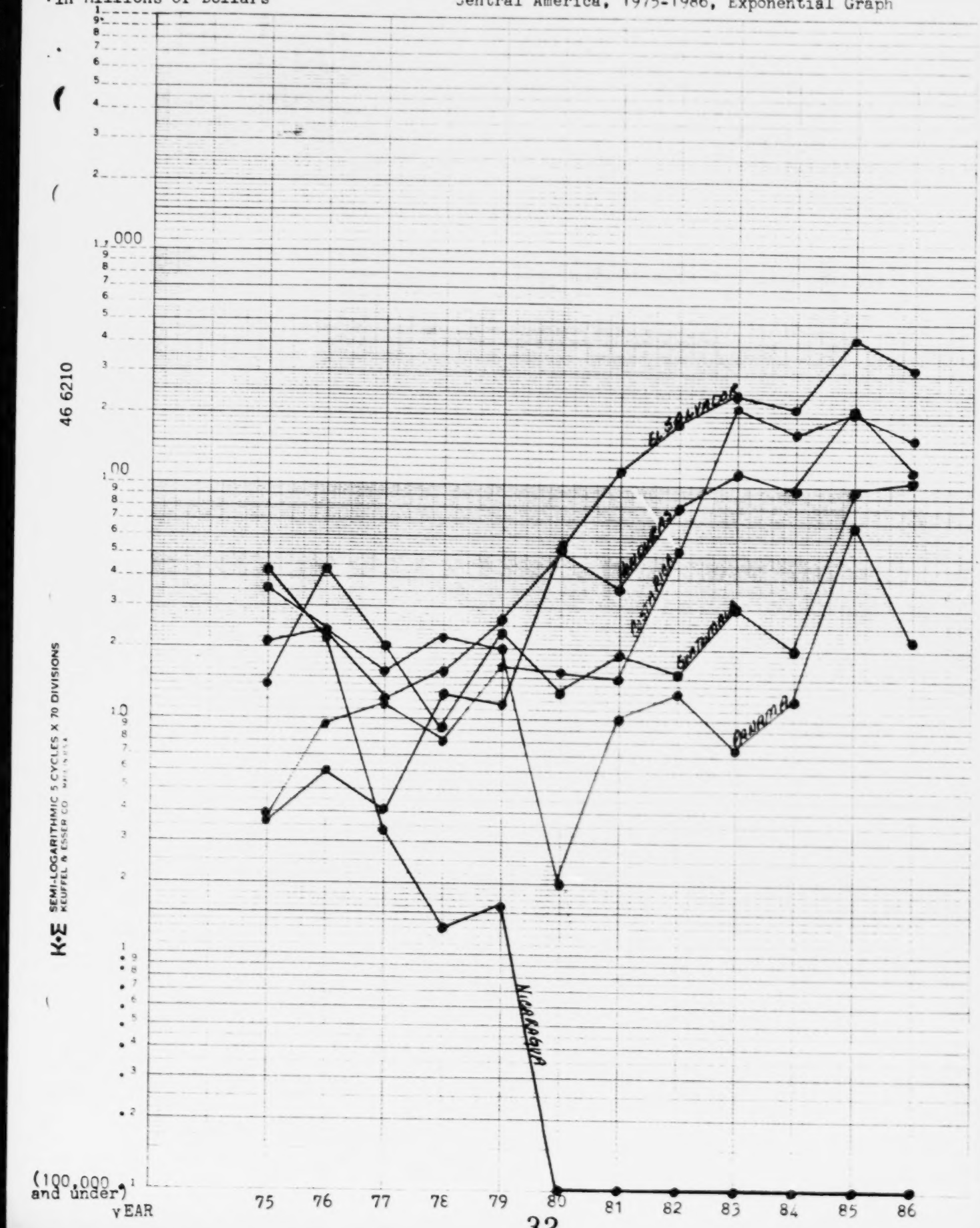


Figure 4: Official Military Assistance to Central America, 1975-1986
Exponential Graph




Economic Asst'c
in Millions of Dollars
Figure 5: Official Foreign Economic Assistance to
Central America, 1975-1986, Exponential Graph
46 6210
K·E SEMI-LOGARITHMIC 5 CYCLES X 70 DIVISIONS
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85
86
EL SALVADOR
HONDURAS
COSTA RICA
GUATEMALA
NICARAGUA

Figure 6: Official Foreign Military, Economic and Total Assistance to Central America, 1975-1986
Exponential Graph

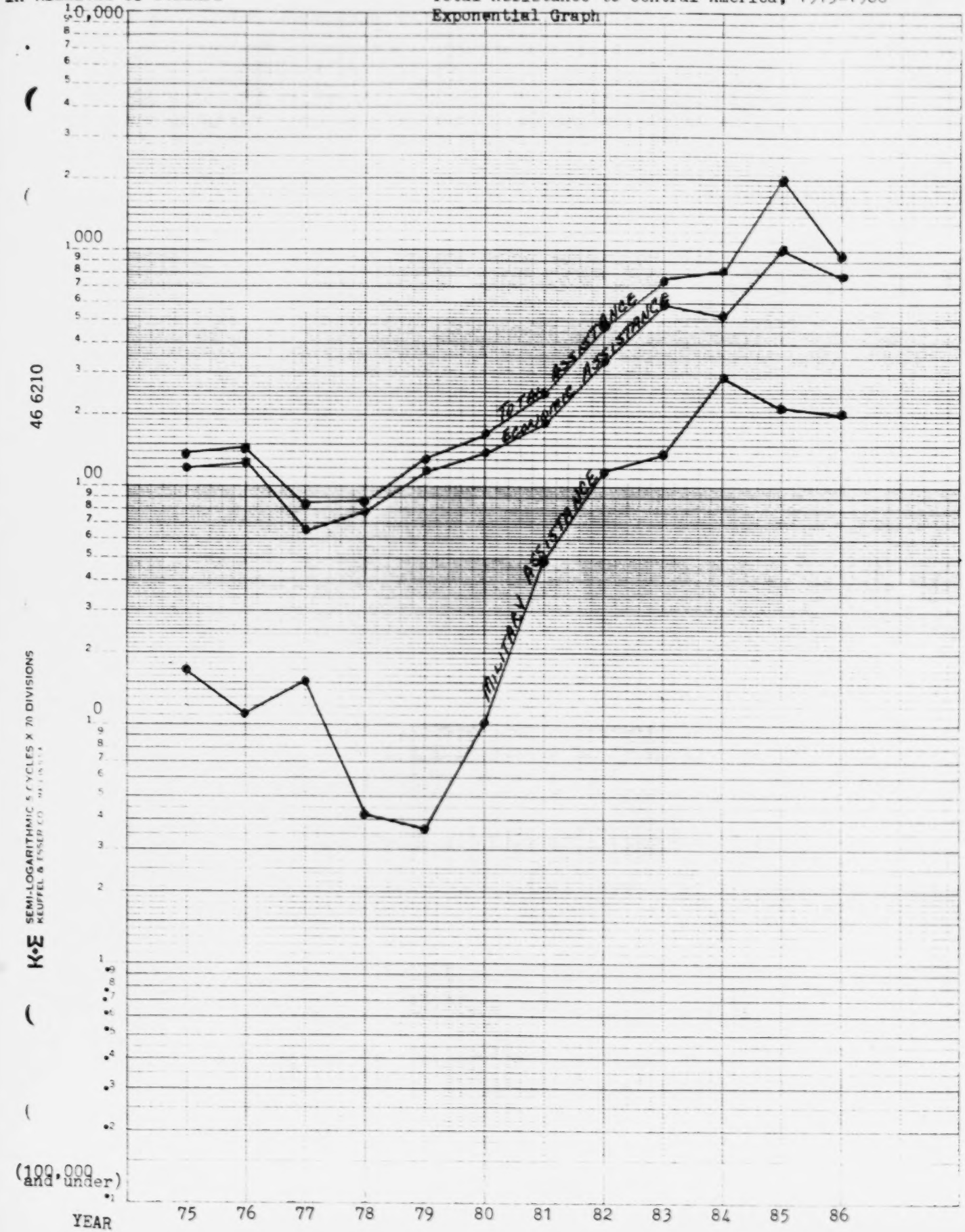

Figure 7: Percent Military Assistance of Total Assistance to Central America, 1975-1986

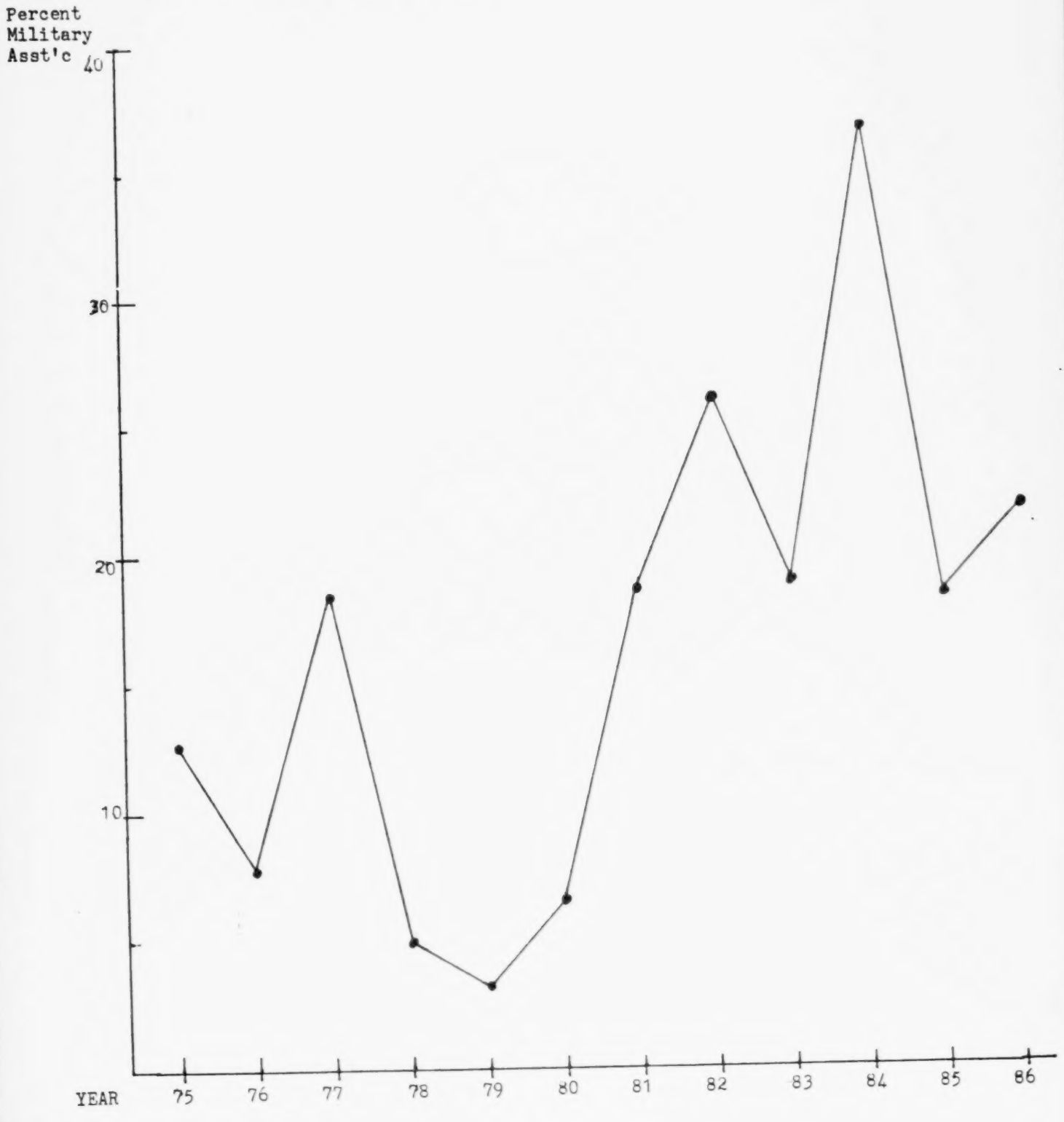

Chart 1

Comparison of Snyder's Model and Revised Model

	Snyder's Model Based on Individual Decision Maker	Revised Model Based on Government Administration
Event leading to "crisis" or uncertainty	Discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba	Formation and threat of formation of new leftist states in Central America
Element of uncertainty	Sudden confrontation with increased Soviet power in the Western hemisphere Unknown motivations and intentions of Soviet Union	Lack of previous diplomatic relations between U.S. and leftist governments in the Western hemisphere
Preceding events or other factors contributing to stress	Bay of Pigs invasion, confrontation with Khrushchev in Vienna; domestic allegation that Kennedy was short on courage, Congressional pressure to stand firm, election politics	Fall of the Shah of Iran, general fears about loss of U.S. prestige and influence in the world
Values traded off:		
1) Immediate issue of concern	Prestige, preservation of military status quo regarding Soviet Union, need to demonstrate resolve	Prestige, preservation of East-West and North-South power relations, need to demonstrate resolve
2) Limiting risk of major war	Included risk of nuclear war	Wholesale human rights abuse and reactive public opinion Escalation of conflict and U.S. involvement in a foreign war

Chart 1, Continued

	Snyder's Model Based on Individual Decision Maker	Revised Model Based on Government Administration
Indicators of cognitive consistency		
1) Evidence of certainty, self righteousness	Perception of Soviet as pushing unreasonably for concessions threatening nuclear war; Perception of U.S. as guardian against nuclear war	Perception of Soviet Union, Cuba, Nicaragua as evildoers with common purpose, Perception of U.S. as guardian of freedom, democracy and progress
2) Denial of trade-offs	Plan to "risk war now or face certain war later"	Exchange of human rights for policy against international terrorism, favorable view of authoritarian regimes, denial of possibility of U.S. troop involvement
3) Strategy of compellence rather one of negotiations and compromise	Insistence on unconditional removal of missiles, focus on single issue rather than integrating other values	Refusal to negotiate with Nicaraguan government, Salvadoran left, Greatly increased military assistance
Result	Khrushchev backs down, Risk of nuclear confrontation	Escalation of military conflict and U.S. involvement in the region

Official Foreign Military Assistance to Central America, 1975 - 1986
In Thousands of Dollars
Figures from U.S. Agency for International Development*

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama
1975	0	5.500	2,900	4,200	4,300	600
1976	0	1,000	2,100	3,500	3,400	1,200
1977	5,000	600	500	3,100	3,100	3,100
1978	0	25	4	3,197	404	514
1979	0	5	6	2,257	12	1,408
1980	0	5,900	0	3,900	0	300
1981	50	35,000	0	8,900	0	400
1982	2,100	82,000	0	31,300	0	5,400
1983	4,600	81,300	0	48,300	0	5,500
1984	9,100	196,600	0	77,400	0	13,500
1985	11,231	126,250	455	67,104	0	10,589
1986	2,584	126,802	5,072	59,717	0	8,230

*Figures for 1975-77: U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations, Report Prepared by Office of Program and Information Analysis Services in the Bureau for Program Policy and Coordination of the Agency for International Development, Wash., D.C., 1978; 1978-79: First and Second Annual Reports of the Chairman of the Development Coordination Committee, U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency, Wash. D.C. 1979, 1980; 1980-84: U.S. Development Cooperation Agency Congressional Presentation FY 1987; 1985-86: 1986 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Development Coordination Committee, Prepared by AID and the Dept. of Commerce International Development Cooperation Agency, Wash., D.C. 1986

Official Foreign Economic Assistance to Central America, 1975 - 1986
In Thousands of Dollars
Figures from U.S. Agency for International Development*

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama
1975	3,700	3,900	14,100	35,600	42,200	21,200
1976	9,300	6,000	43,500	24,400	22,000	24,700
1977	11,600	4,100	20,800	12,200	3,300	16,300
1978	8,200	10,358	9,385	16,138	13,268	22,189
1979	17,174	10,179	23,908	27,556	16,287	20,530
1980	16,000	58,300	13,000	53,100	0	2,000
1981	15,300	114,000	19,000	36,400	0	10,600
1982	51,700	182,200	15,500	80,700	0	13,000
1983	214,100	245,600	29,700	106,000	0	7,400
1984	169,900	215,900	20,300	95,000	0	12,000
1985	204,818	424,826	97,669	215,467	0	68,822
1986	157,546	308,893	104,457	128,077	0	22,942

*Figures for 1975-77: U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations, Report Prepared by Office of Program and Information Analysis Services in the Bureau for Program Policy and Coordination of the Agency for International Development, Wash., D.C., 1978; 1978-79: First and Second Annual Reports of the Chairman of the Development Coordination Committee, U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency, Wash. D.C. 1979, 1980; 1980-84: U.S. Development Cooperation Agency Congressional Presentaiton FY 1987; 1985-86: 1986 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Development Coordination Committee, Prepared by AID and the Dept. of Commerce International Development Cooperation Agency, Wash., D.C. 1986

Official Military and Economic Assistance to Central, 1975 - 1986: Totals and Percent Military of Total Assistance, In Thousands of Dollars*

	Total Economic Assistance	Total Military Assistance	Total Mil. & Ec. Assistance	Percent Military of Tot. Assistance
1975	120,700	17,500	138,200	12.7
1976	129,900	11,200	141,100	7.9
1977	68,300	15,400	83,700	18.4
1978	79,538	4,144	83,682	5.0
1979	115,634	3,688	119,322	3.1
1980	142,400	10,100	152,500	6.6
1981	195,300	44,850	240,150	18.7
1982	343,100	120,800	463,900	26.0
1983	602,800	139,700	742,500	18.8
1984	513,100	296,600	809,700	36.6
1985	1,011,602	225,629	1,237,231	18.2
1986	725,743	202,405	928,148	21.8

*Computed from U.S. AID figures